

A vibrant yellow background is decorated with various Easter-themed items. In the top left, there's a green plastic spatula and a small basket of colorful candy eggs. Next to it is a white egg with a brown zigzag pattern. In the top right, a purple hairbrush and a pink brush are visible. The center features the title 'TASTE and SEE' in large, dark purple serif font. Below the title, the subtitle 'Reflection, Remembrance (and Recipes) for Holiday Gatherings' is written in a smaller, black sans-serif font. The bottom left shows a green whisk and a purple spatula. The bottom right has a large white cross-shaped cookie decorated with green icing, a speckled blue egg, and another basket of candy eggs. Scattered throughout are colorful sprinkles, small candy eggs, and other Easter cookies like a butterfly and a heart shape.

TASTE and SEE

**Reflection, Remembrance
(and Recipes)
for Holiday Gatherings**

The background is a bright yellow surface decorated with various Easter-themed items. In the top left, there's a small basket of colorful Easter eggs (blue, orange, pink) and a pink bunny-shaped cookie cutter. In the bottom left, there's a pink and blue swirl-shaped cookie cutter and a small basket of colorful Easter eggs. In the bottom right, there's a pink and blue swirl-shaped cookie cutter and a small basket of colorful Easter eggs. In the center, there's a small basket of colorful Easter eggs (blue, orange, pink) and a small basket of colorful Easter eggs (blue, orange, pink).

Introduction

...no one puts new wine into old wineskins.

LUKE 5:37

In our pop-culture-obsessed age, there's a common notion that sequels, in general, are disappointments. Being derivative of their originals, they tend to overdo what made their predecessors successful in the first place, losing the magic or "it-factor" of what came before.

Likewise, it might seem a little tiresome to repeat the same practices and traditions year after year: "We're fasting again?" "Why do I have to give up anything at all?" "We've heard this story already!" With solemn reflection, penance and almsgiving, the feelings of anticipation and joy also don't naturally spring to mind for this holy season in the same way they do during Advent and Christmas. Is Lent then putting "new wine into old wineskins"?

We don't think so. In fact, we believe we're doing the opposite: putting new wine into fresh wineskins. We Christians are a post-resurrection people. On that first Easter morning, everything changed. The world has born anew in the promise of salvation for all that was realized in that fateful vacant tomb. Thus, Lent and Easter aren't sequels to Advent and Christmas but something entirely different, yet still wonderful. And this makes us want to celebrate, to leap with joy, to share in the Good News of this brand-new world with everyone.

So accept our invitation to some treasured recipes and traditions for the season. Come taste and see: "This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

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The background is a light blue surface decorated with various Easter-themed items. In the top left, there's a brown chocolate egg. In the top right, a small woven basket contains several colorful Easter eggs (green, pink, orange). Scattered around are individual eggs in orange, yellow, and light green. There are also small yellow star-shaped cookies and a green licorice stick. In the bottom left, a green bowl is filled with colorful Easter eggs. In the bottom right, there's a pink bunny-shaped cookie and more small yellow star cookies and a green licorice stick.

Here Am I, Send Me!

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said, “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.”

ISAIAH 6:6-7

Is it true for you as it is for me? Behind my favorite holiday foods or treats, there is usually a story—a specific memory tied to the first time the item was shared or prepared. Example: My family eats a fondue meal each year because a gaudy yellow-colored pot was gifted to my parents around Easter in the early 1970s. It was brought out two years in a row, and “voilà,” an unbroken tradition was started. Ever since, we sit or stand around that same pot and happily remind each other of why we do this year after year. The storied tale has expanded now to include spouses, grandchildren, step-siblings, guests and their families. A chapter even includes how, at 3 years old, I was burned by a frozen shrimp being dropped in hot oil. Ouch!

Was it true for the prophet Isaiah as well? Each time he wrote of God’s long-expected promises coming true—of the salvation of the Lord being nigh—did Isaiah think back to where his own storytelling started? Was the memory of the hot ember burning his lips fresh in his mind year after year?

All these millennia later, we join Isaiah around the Lord’s altar as part of the ongoing story. Through Christ’s sacrifice, our wickedness is removed, our sin is purged. We hear the Lord’s call as Isaiah did. And we joyfully echo Isaiah’s words from that first taste of God’s sending. Who shall God send? “Here am I, send me!”

Simple Hot Crossed Buns

This traditional Lenten treat, marked with a cross, is a symbol of the crucifixion, and the spices used in the buns (like cinnamon and nutmeg) were associated with the spices used to anoint Jesus' body after his death.

Ingredients

- 1 cup warm milk
- 2 tbsp. instant yeast
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup vegetable oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup maple syrup
- 2 eggs (divided)
- 3 cups all-purpose flour (plus up to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra if needed)
- 2 tsp. pumpkin spice mix (on cinnamon and nutmeg powder)
- 1 tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins

For the Cross

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2-3 tbsp. milk

Instructions

1. Combine warm milk and yeast. Add oil, maple syrup and 1 egg. Mix well.
2. Add flour, pumpkin spice and salt. Mix until shaggy dough forms.
3. Knead on floured surface for 5 minutes until smooth. Add extra flour if too sticky.
4. Soak raisins in hot water for 2-3 minutes, drain. Flatten dough, add raisins, fold and shape into ball.
5. Divide into 12 pieces, roll into balls and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
6. Brush with beaten egg (remaining egg). Let rise 15-20 minutes while oven preheats to 400°F.
7. Bake 12-15 minutes until golden brown.
8. Mix powdered sugar and milk for cross. Pipe onto cooled buns.

The background is a solid light purple color. In the top left, there is a yellow Easter egg with brown heart-shaped cutouts. To its right is a pink Easter egg with gold speckles. In the top left corner, there is a pink butterfly-shaped cookie with white icing. In the bottom right corner, there is a white butterfly-shaped cookie with blue icing. Scattered around are small white and yellow sprinkles.

Tempted but Still Together

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

MATTHEW 4:1-2 (ESV)

Perhaps the most common question of the season is “What are you giving up for Lent?” Many people often respond with a favorite food, TV show or some habit these 40 days offer as an opportunity to overcome.

This is fine as it goes, but there is a risk of missing an even more critical issue: Why we are fasting or giving up something in the first place?

Purification, in an effort to imitate Christ’s example, is a ready answer. That’s true, but we are not merely aspiring towards Jesus’ perfect nature as if it’s a lofty, unreachable standard and we just get points for trying. No, it’s more than that. We give up something during Lent to draw near to him.

Coming with being fully man, the very same temptations and struggles we all endure were a fixture of Jesus’ earthly life. He got hungry, thirsty, tired, angry, anxious and scared. So these 40 days are a reminder our Lord is with us, sympathizing and willing us to grow more steadfast in faith to grow ever closer to him.

It’s also a reminder that we, too, have family members undergoing their own Lenten fasting. There really is no reason why each one of us in a family must do Lent alone. Even angels “waited on” Jesus in the desert (v. 11).

Remember: You all are tested and tempted but still together, in faith to the Lord, during this most holy season.



Discussion Questions

1. Have everyone gathered share what he or she is giving up for Lent. Why this particular food or habit as opposed to another?
2. Ask why we give up something in the first place. What does it show about your faith? Brainstorm potential strategies that help each other stay true to your Lenten commitments.
3. What are some volunteer activities your family can do together one night a week or on the weekend to reinforce the idea we don't do Lent alone?

Gather around, everyone! Let's remember and reflect, "taste and see" (Psalm 34:8), that the Lord is good and with us throughout the Lenten season, which is a cause for special celebration. As Holy Week and Easter approach, immerse you and your loved ones in this booklet's collection of family memories, precious recipes and festive traditions, making room in your hearts, homes and tables for both Jesus and joy during this holiest time of year.



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